

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A device for dispensing a bag from a stack of bags, the device comprising:

a plate vertically mounted on a frame, said plate defining a vertically oriented planar bag-supporting surface and an opposite vertically oriented planar surface;

a rotatable shaft mounted on top of said frame;

at least one roller non-rotatably affixed to said shaft and arranged to engage a bag of the stack of bags nearest said planar bag-supporting surface; means for rotating said shaft whereby said nearest bag is shifted over said at least one roller; and

a bag detector coupled to the means for rotating said shaft, such that when the bag detector detects the presence of a bag, the rotatable shaft stops rotating,

wherein the stack of bags is held against said vertically oriented planar bag-supporting surface, and when said rotatable shaft rotates, said nearest bag is shifted over said at least one roller and descends down along said vertically oriented opposite planar surface side of said plate, said plate being disposed between said dispensed nearest bag and the stack of bags.

2-9. (Canceled).

10. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 1, ~~wherein said~~ further comprising a bag retaining element that includes a bag-retaining bar for engaging and retaining said stack of bags against said at least one roller before and during dispensing.

11. (Original) The device according to claim 10, wherein said bag-retaining bar is coupled to an arm pivotally coupled to said plate.

12-18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 1, further comprising an elongate guide mounted adjacent said rollers to guide dispensed bags away from the rollers.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for dispensing a bag from a stack of bags, the method comprising:

holding a stack of bags against at least one roller non-rotatably affixed to a rotatable shaft coupled to a plate vertically mounted on a frame and defining a vertically oriented planar bag-supporting surface and an opposite vertically oriented planar surface;

dispensing one bag from said stack of bags nearest said vertically oriented planar bag-supporting surface to said opposite vertically oriented planar surface of said plate by rotating said rotatable shaft so as to shift said nearest one bag over said at least one roller such that said nearest one bag descends down along said opposite vertically oriented planar surface; and

automatically stopping rotation of said shaft after dispensing said nearest one bag.

21. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 20, wherein said step of automatically stopping includes detecting presence of a dispensed bag adjacent a dispensed bag detector; and stopping rotation of said shaft in response thereto.

22. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein the rotatable shaft is drivingly coupled to a motor, and the step of rotating said rotatable shaft comprises actuating said motor, the method further comprising:

causing said at least one roller to engage one bag in said stack of bags nearest said vertically oriented planar bag-supporting surface, such that rotation of said rotatable shaft causes said at least one roller to remove said nearest bag from said stack of bags.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 22, wherein said step of automatically stopping includes automatically stopping said motor in response to dispensing of said nearest one bag from said stack of bags.

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 20, wherein at least one roller is non-rotatably affixed to a second rotatable shaft, said second shaft is mounted parallel to said rotatable shaft, said rotatable shaft is disposed between said second rotatable shaft and said one bag from said stack of bags, and said at least one roller on said rotatable shaft is coupled to said at least one roller on said second shaft, whereby rotation of said rotatable shaft causes concomitant rotation of said second shaft.

25. (Original) The method of claim 20, further comprising drivingly coupling a manual rotation means to said rotatable shaft, such that actuation of said manual rotation means rotates said shaft.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 29, wherein the bag retaining element is biased toward a closed orientation with respect to the plate.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of holding a stack of bags against at least one roller non-rotatably fixed to a rotatable shaft comprises providing a bag retaining element having a first end pivotally connected to the frame and a second end, and wherein the bag retaining element is spring-biased toward a closed orientation with respect to the plate.

29. (Previously Presented) A device for dispensing a bag from a stack of bags, the device comprising:

a plate mounted on a frame, said plate defining a planar bag-supporting surface and an opposite planar surface;

a rotatable shaft coupled to said frame;

at least one roller non-rotatably affixed to said shaft and arranged to engage a bag of the stack of bags nearest said planar bag-supporting surface; means for rotating said shaft whereby said nearest bag is shifted over said at least one roller;

a bag detector coupled to the means for rotating said shaft, such that when the bag detector detects the presence of a bag, the rotatable shaft stops rotating,

wherein the stack of bags is held against said planar bag-supporting surface, and when said rotatable shaft rotates, said nearest bag is thereby dispensed to said opposite planar surface side of said plate, said plate being disposed between said dispensed nearest bag and the stack of bags, and wherein said rotatable shaft is mounted on said frame, and the device further comprises a bag retaining element coupled to said plate for pressing the stack of bags against said at least one roller, said bag retaining element having a first end and a second end, said first end of said bag retaining element being pivotally connected to said plate.

30. (New) A device for dispensing a bag from a stack of bags, the device comprising:
a plate vertically mounted on a frame, said plate defining a planar bag-supporting surface and an opposite planar surface;

a first rotatable shaft mounted on top of said frame;

a second rotatable shaft mounted parallel to said rotatable shaft on an extension of said frame, wherein said extension is attached to the frame and extends away from the plate;

at least one roller non-rotatably affixed to said first rotatable shaft and arranged to engage a bag of the stack of bags nearest said planar bag-supporting surface; means for rotating said first rotatable shaft whereby said nearest bag is shifted over said at least one roller;

at least one roller non-rotatably affixed to said second rotatable shaft;

wherein each roller on said first rotatable shaft is coupled to a roller on said second rotatable shaft, whereby rotation of said first rotatable shaft causes concomitant rotation of said second rotatable shaft, and said first rotatable shaft is disposed between said second rotatable shaft and a bag retaining element; and

a bag detector coupled to the means for rotating said first rotatable shaft, such that when the bag detector detects the presence of a bag, the first rotatable shaft stops rotating,

wherein the stack of bags is held against said planar bag-supporting surface, and when said first rotatable shaft rotates, said nearest bag is shifted over said at least one roller and descends

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down along said opposite planar surface side of said plate, said plate being disposed between said dispensed nearest bag and the stack of bags.